

THURSDAY, DEC. 4, 1976
Pioneer Days - July 9-11, '76

County History

We got started on Marlinton school history, then came the opera house, and this week we have some more recollections.

One of the Bicentennial Committee's projects is to bring Pocahontas County history up to date. We ask that every community gather together what history has been written and bring it up to date. We will print it in parts as you seek to get it or when it is finished.

This is a history of Marlinton printed in the Pocahontas Times in 1923.

First Things in Marlinton

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First Things in Marlinton

The first settler was Jacob Marlin, and from him the town got its name. He was here in 1749, and nobody knows how much earlier. The place was first called Marlins Bottom. Changed in 1887 to Marlinton at the request of a Mrs. Skyles who moved here from Baltimore and who objected to the word Bottom as not being a nice word. The old timers were horrified when they found that the name had been changed on them overnight, so to speak, but the damage was done, and all appeals to Congress failed to undo the harm. The lady soon afterwards moved away but she left us christened with a new name. About twenty years ago the

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horrified when they found that the name had been changed on them overnight, so to speak, but the damage was done, and all appeals to Congress failed to undo the harm. The lady soon afterwards moved away but she left us christened with a new name. About twenty years ago the town almost unanimously petitioned Washington to change the name to McGraw. This change of name was refused because there was a postoffice in West Virginia by the name of McGraws. And so the name continues to be Marlinton, and it would be a bold bad citizen who would suggest a change of name now that a large and important town has developed under it, and has succeeded in acquiring more "good will" than any of the impor-

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of McGraws. And so the name continues to be Marlinton, and it would be a bold bad citizen who would suggest a change of name now that a large and important town has developed under it, and has succeeded in acquiring more "good will" than any of the important centers of West Virginia.

The first court that I know of being held here was under an oak tree on the west side of the river above the bridge by Squire G. M. Kee. The first lawyer I ever heard plead in Marlinton was F. J. Snyder, a noted lawyer who lived in Huntersville. And he was opposed that day by L. M. McClintic, who is still with us, and who was just starting on his professional career.

The first term of the Circuit Court was held in June or October, 1893. The

in the low slough along leading to just opposite A. C. Pifer

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June or October, 1893. The
election to move the county
seat from Huntersville to
Marlinton was held in the
fall of 1891, and a building
at the corner of Fourth
Avenue and Ninth Street
was erected which is still
called the Temporary Court
house. The judge was
Judge A. N. Campbell, of

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Monroe county. He was a great lawyer. He was of commanding appearance. Over six feet tall, with a heavy black beard. He weighed three hundred and fifteen pounds.

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The first sheriff of the county lived here, Major William Poage. His house was near Eleventh Street on Camden Avenue. In this house was born James A. Moffett, who was in his lifetime the president of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. The first postmaster was James Ataly Price. The first student to go to college from this place was the late Rev. Wm. T. Price, A.B., A.M., D.D., who was

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born here in 1680, and who departed this life here at the age of ninety-one years.

The first recorded land title was 480 acres taking in a great part of the level land which dates from a survey made in 1751, by Gen. Andrew Lewis. This land is mentioned in his will as being at the mouth of Ewings Creek, by which name Knapps Creek was first known. Too much cannot be made of this fact that Gen. Andrew Lewis owned the heart of this town from 1751 to his death some thirty years afterwards. He was a great general of the Revolutionary War, and George Washington was his fidus Achates. In those

his fidus Achates. In those early days of Washington's life, there can be no doubt that this was one of his most familiar haunts.

The first bank to be established was the Bank of Marlinton, followed in a few weeks by the Pocahontas Bank, which afterwards became the First National.

The first newspaper was The Times. The first store was opened by J. R. Apperson in a house now occupied as a dwelling which stands directly opposite the entrance of the bridge on the west side of the river.

The first business of any kind established here was a combined sawmill and carding mill built by James

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The first business of any kind established here was a combined sawmill and carding mill built by James A. Price before the Civil war and which was located in the low place called the slough along the boulevard leading to Campbelltown, just opposite the home of A. C. Pifer.

It was run by water power, and the water came from Stony Creek. An effort to augment this power by water from the Greenbrier River from an intake just below the mouth of Stony Creek failed, and the plant itself was washed away in the flood of 1877, which is the highest water of which

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This mill was in charge of
a man by the name of
James E. A. Gibbs, who
was a man of the tenant
class, and who barely made
a living for himself and a
large family. In fact the
main remembrance that the
older people had of the
family was the struggle that
they had to keep from
starving. It was during this
time that Gibbs was work-
ing on his model for a
sewing machine. He fash-
ioned a working model out
of wood from a laurel root,
which developed the idea of
the chain stitch sewing
machine, which entitles
him to the claim of being an
inventor of first order. The
lock stitch idea was adver-

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tised some few years earlier, but it did not entitle the inventor to the distinction of being the inventor of the sewing machine, for the people of this vicinity know the Gibbs' idea antedated the lock stitch, and was on a different idea. Gibbs carried his invention to the north and formed a partnership with a mechanic by the name of Wilcox, and the manufacture of the machines began. Gibbs returned home, the Civil war broke out, the Gibbs family starved almost and at the end of five years Gibbs got back to Delaware, and found that Wilcox was turn-

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back to Delaware, and found that Wilcox was turning out sewing machines at a great rate, and that the share of Gibbs had been put to his credit regularly in a bank, and from that time Gibbs was rich. In the nineties Gibbs came back for several visits. He was a very tall man—about six feet and seven inches, I think, wore a silk hat, and had the biggest nose that I ever saw on a human being. He said at that time he had taken out some one hundred and sixty three patents. The Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine is still one of the standard machines offered

taken out some one hundred and sixty three patents. The Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine is still one of the standard machines offered to the public, and I believe it is considered the very best for heavy sewing, such as leather. I am not sure about this.

One of the earliest stores was opened by Paul Golden who is still with us though not in the mercantile business. A sign that he had painted on the store in his early days caused some hilarity among the nations in the world. It read: "Go no farther to be Cheated." The language is loose and capable of two constructions. Anyway it has the

no farther to be Cheated." The language is loose and capable of two constructions. Anyway it has the right to be grouped under the head of Commercial Candor.

The first school of which there is any authentic record was opened in a log cabin that stood near Riverside. It closed after a session or two. It was a private enterprise. There must have been some school earlier than that for one of the fields on Stony Creek has always been called the School House Meadow. Up to the eighties, the nearest school was Huntersville. In the eighties, the first school

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ies, the nearest school was
Huntersville. In the eight-
ies, the free school system
having been established, a
one room frame building
was put up on the Price Run
where the house of William
Stewart now stands. Miss
Emma Warwick, Judge
Geo. W. McClintic, County
Superintendent, W. M.
Mathews, Rev. Dr. Price,
Squire Charles Cook, from
Rhode Island, were some of
the noted persons who
taught in that little school
house. The next school was
a two room building, still
standing, as the Ira Irvine

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taught in that little school house. The next school was a two room building, still standing, as the Ira Irvine building on the banks of Knapps Creek. The next was the present graded school building, a substantial brick, which has become too small though augmented by a still finer high school property. We had a great time building that eight roomed brick graded school, and there were many that predicted that there never would be a time when there was need of one half such a building. In fact even in that comparative recent time, it was very

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school building.

The first teacher's institute was held in 1886 in the Presbyterian Church. The first church built was the Presbyterian church on the site of the present building. The first resident judge of the court, Judge S. H. Sharp. The first mayor of the town, Andrew Price. The first state senator, N. C. McNeil. The first Presidential Elector, Col. O. H. Kee. The first delegate to the legislature, L. M. McClinton. The first member of the county court, Dr. N. R. Price. The first chief of police, J. A. Sharp.

The first train to arrive at Marlinton was in the year 1900, on the completion of the track leading to this

the county court, Dr. N. R. Price. The first chief of police, J. A. Sharp.

The first train to arrive at Marlinton was in the year 1900, on the completion of the track laying to this point. It was made a public ceremony and some thousands gathered here and they barbecued beef and had a celebration. They told at Ronceverte that night that when the train got here that the great crowd gathered around the locomotive, and that the engineer requested them to give him room to turn his train around and that they cleared a space of some acres. It was not true. Not even an original lie. Only a localized anecdote.

But for excitement over first events let me refer you

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But for excitement over
first events let me refer you
to the first jail delivery,
when Armstrong and Cum-
berland got out of jail at
dusk one evening in the
nineties. The jail had been
completed and it was the
modern idea of a strong
jail, and it was confidently
expected that it would hold
anybody. The county had
suffered a series of bold
robberies, and suspicion
had attached to Alex Arm-
strong, an intelligent color-
ed man, a native of this
county, who had removed
to an Ohio town. It was
thought that he raided this
county regularly, and that
he would come to the

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to an Ohio town. It was
thought that he raided this
county regularly, and that
he would come to the
nearest railroad station,
and make a quick trip into
the county and return with
his booty. This belief was
so sure that the authorities
waited and watched for him
to return, and he showed
up one winter day travel-
ling incognito with a big
burly strange negro. R. V.
Burns arrested them and
they were indicted and
afterwards convicted of the
robbery of Capt. A. M.
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of a revolver in his own
house after nightfall.

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ling incognito with a burly strange negro. Burns arrested them they were indicted afterwards convicted of the robbery of Capt. A. M. Edgar, held up at the point of a revolver in his own house after nightfall.

They lulled the jailer into a sense of security and when they got between him and the door of the cage, they shut the door and left and got away. A large force of volunteers assembled in an hour or so and patrolled the roads all night, and found nothing. But the elements warred against the fugitives. It was summer time, but the night saw one of the heaviest rainfalls that this country ever experienced. The accused travelled many miles that

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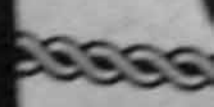
the fugitives. It was summer time, but the night saw one of the heaviest rainfalls that this country ever experienced. The accused travelled many miles that night but they lost their way and daylight found them about two miles from town. They had wandered all night, confused by the great tempest and the network of streams. They were exhausted. They took cover in the old Hamlin Chapel, on Stony Creek. They got as far as Laurel Creek about ten miles from Marlinton and surrendered to a volunteer posse and were brought in. They were pretty well starved.

Some of us old residents have never had a residence in any other city.

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pretty well starved.

Some of us old resident-
ers have never had a resi-
dence in any other town or
city. And we feel that the
only way that you can really
know a town is to see it
built. With the exception of
the toll house and the
McLaughlin house, I have
seen every house built in
this town. If I have not
overlooked some odd house
or two in a hasty mental
survey, Yes a part of the B.
M. Yeager house is older
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deal to say for a town as
substantial as Marlinton,
with its court-house, bank
buildings, school buildings,
and churches. Especially
the Methodist church now
in the course of erection

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M. Yeager house is older than that. That is a good deal to say for a town as substantial as Marlinton, with its court-house, bank buildings, school buildings, and churches. Especially the Methodist church now in the course of erection which will be one of the notable buildings of the State.

I often think of one of my boy friends many years ago saying that he had had a dream. That he seemed on top of Elk Mountain looking down over Marlins Bottom, and the bottom appeared to be roofed over. That is one dream that has come to pass.

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